



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
ARCTIC VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
TOWN OF WEST WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND**

**OVERVIEW:**

The Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency is seeking qualified and experienced real estate developers/development firms to propose and fulfill mixed-use revitalization opportunities within the Arctic Village Redevelopment District. Arctic Village is the civic and commercial center of the Town of West Warwick Rhode Island. Over time the area has experienced a period of decline in terms of its condition, value and its contribution to the economy of West Warwick. Like many other New England communities, Arctic Village has been subject to long term shifts in manufacturing and employment patterns, transportation networks, retailing and housing preferences that cannot be easily reversed.

The Town of West Warwick, through its newly established Redevelopment Agency, desires to actively seek new development opportunities that would redefine Arctic Village and establish a new role for the Town's village center. To that end, the Redevelopment Agency is interested in exploring proposals from qualified developers and/or development firms who have the expertise and experience in mixed use (re)development and eventually partnering with one or more developers and/or development firms to redevelop and revitalize Arctic Village utilizing the development tools and incentives presented here and in the Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy.

***NOTE: The Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy Report and other related resource material is available for review on-line at [www.westwarwickri.org](http://www.westwarwickri.org)***

***To access the resource material go to Town Departments in the banner at the top of the home page and click on Town Planner; once on the Town Planner page, click on the Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency link toward the bottom of the page.***

The Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency possesses all of the powers and authority granted under RIGL 45-32-5 Corporate powers of agencies, including but not limited to, the purchase, lease, and/or otherwise acquire any real or personal property, to acquire by the exercise of eminent domain, to develop real property, to cause to be laid out streets and highways, sidewalks, public utilities, parks and recreational areas, off street parking areas, to prepare all plans necessary for redevelopment, and to carry on and perform for and on behalf of the planning commission any or all parts of planning activities within the redevelopment district. The Redevelopment Agency is committed to the judicious exercise of its power and authority to advance the redevelopment of Arctic Village, to facilitate appropriate development and to streamline the local approval process.

Accordingly, the Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency is advertising this Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking experienced real estate developers/development firms who may be interested in partnering with the Redevelopment Agency to develop all or select portions of the Arctic Village Redevelopment District.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In 2012 the Town of West Warwick commissioned a study entitled "Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy" prepared by the Cecil Group in conjunction with FXM Associates and Fitzgerald & Halliday. The study is the product of an extensive public planning process in which the town's residents, business owners, local and state political leaders including the Town Council Members, State Legislators and the Town Manager expressed their strong support for the formal adoption of the "Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy," the redevelopment process and the creation of the Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency.

The purpose of the study was to examine the current conditions of Arctic Village and to recommend various possibilities for revitalizing the area. The Redevelopment Strategy provided the framework necessary for the Town to create a redevelopment district as prescribed in Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) Title 45, Chapters 31 - 33 and was the catalyst for the West Warwick Town Council to create the Arctic Village Redevelopment District (Ordinance No. 2014-3) and the Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency (Ordinance No. 2014-4) which is responsible for overseeing redevelopment of the Arctic Village Redevelopment District.

The Redevelopment Agency held its inaugural meeting in November 2014. Following several meetings in which the Redevelopment Agency examined potential funding options, reviewed the Redevelopment Strategy and assessed past redevelopment efforts and redevelopment plans for Arctic Village, the Agency reached a consensus that it should determine if there may be any experienced developers and/or development firms that may be interested in partnering with the Agency to develop all or select portions of Arctic Village in conjunction with the Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy.

## **THE ARCTIC VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

The Redevelopment Strategy, commissioned by the Town in 2012, explains how Arctic Village can and should reposition itself to take advantage of its many assets to again become a prosperous mixed use village center in the Town of West Warwick. To accomplish this, the Redevelopment Strategy calls for the Town to take advantage of 21<sup>st</sup> century opportunities through a focused, consistent and sequential process that utilizes key public sector tools in conjunction with private sector actions to reverse past trends. The Strategy recommends that the Town implement targeted municipal actions and focused assistance utilizing grants, subsidies and innovative financing techniques to foster strong, sustainable, private sector investment.

The key public sector tools and methods prescribed in the Redevelopment Strategy include, the establishment of a Redevelopment Authority (Completed 2014) responsible for managing and participating in a broad range of redevelopment initiatives to reinvest in underutilized land and buildings, to attract grants, financing and funding including the State's current initiatives to assist

Arctic Village as a Main Street district. Another tool is the adoption of a redevelopment plan or plans as prescribed in RIGL 45-32-6 "Redevelopment Project." One of the principal goals of this RFP process is for the Redevelopment Agency to ultimately partner with an experienced private sector developer and/or developers to create a "shared vision" redevelopment plan(s) and to work in partnership to ensure the plan comes to fruition.

Additional tools presented in the Redevelopment Strategy include, circulation improvements; the Redevelopment Agency will commit to work with experienced private sector developers to provide an appropriate roadway network designed to support the economic and civic revitalization of Arctic Village including the possibility of eliminating one way streets and if necessary abandoning certain streets and roadways to accommodate desirable development within the Redevelopment District. Tax Incentives, including consideration of tax treaties with the Town authorizing phased implementation of tax rates, potential of reduced and/or phased assessments, the implementation of the Municipal Economic Development (MED) zone and the Town's designated State Enterprise Zone status, along with the potential of funding capital through possible access to the unique Federal EB-5 Foreign Investor Program for qualifying development.

The Town of West Warwick has also been designated as a Rhode Island "Hope Community" and as such receives priority status under the newly created economic development incentives and programs administered by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation including but not limited to the "Rebuild RI Tax Credit Program" and the "Qualified Jobs Incentive Program."

The MED zone which was adopted by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 2003 (RIGL 44-18-30C) provides sales tax incentives for new business construction within an area of the Arctic Village Redevelopment District (downtown Arctic). The MED zone legislation exempts 50% of the current use and sales tax for qualifying business within the zone and returns the remaining 50% of the use and sales tax to the Town to be reinvested into the MED zone over a period of 10 years from activation. Activation of the MED zone requires Town Council action. The Town Council has not activated the MED zone legislation instead waiting until optimum conditions exist allowing the Town to realize the maximum benefit of the legislation.

The Rebuild RI Tax Credit program, available through the RI Commerce Corporation, provides up to 30% capitol credit on eligible project costs with a \$15 million project cap to qualified real estate projects that demonstrate a "financing gap."

The Qualified Jobs Incentive Program, also available through the RI Commerce Corporation, provides businesses with a base tax credit up to \$2,500 per new full-time job with Bonuses of up to \$7,500 per job if certain criteria (targeted industry, hope community, etc.) are met.

The Town of West Warwick is also designated as a State Enterprise Zone. As a result, any business located in the Town that that expands its full-time employment base by 5% may be eligible for a tax credit equal to 50% of the annual wages paid to new employees up to a maximum of \$2,500.00 per employee; if the employee resides in the enterprise zone, the credit is equal to 75% or a maximum of \$5,000.00 per employee.

Federal EB-5 Foreign Investor Program was created by Congress in 1990 to stimulate the U.S. economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors. A local group specializing in the EB-5 Foreign Investor Program has expressed an interest in potentially partnering in the redevelopment of Arctic Village by providing substantial financial capital for development within the district through the EB-5 program.

Other tools presented in the Redevelopment Strategy include Branding and Marketing, to be accomplished in partnership with potential developers and Stewardship; the dedication of the Town's civic, business and political leadership to the long-term process of revitalizing the Arctic Village Redevelopment District.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:**

The Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency desires reinvent Arctic Village through the establishment of quality development within the Arctic Village Redevelopment District (see accompanying map) that capitalizes on current market forces, the unique characteristics of Arctic including the civic, historic, scenic and natural resources, and the available incentives to enhance the long-term economic development potential of the Town.

The proposed (re)development program would reinvent Arctic Village by creating a mixed use development consisting of retail, office, service type uses and residential development. The objective of this mixed use development is to create a dynamic, integrated community of residents and visitors that offers day and evening activities for business people, village and area residents, and visitors from existing automobile through-traffic. As part of the reinvention process, the Agency envisions the establishment of an entertainment component through a combination of arts related activities ("The Arctic Playhouse," a live theater company, recently relocated to the village). The Agency also envisions concerts and other entertainment activities in the "village gazebo" park and the possible development of artist loft space along with physical activities like walking and bicycling on the West Warwick Greenway Bicycle path, developing connectivity and scenic vistas along the Pawtuxet River and the establishment of specialty restaurants, shops and stores.

Development principles include (in no particular order of importance):

- Encourage adaptive reuse of landmark and historic buildings and mills, potential for mixed use development and a possible arts component.
- Bring focus back to Main Street retail, including consideration of limited small to medium sized retail establishments.
- Identify and improve connections to the waterfront (the Pawtuxet River) including physical connections and the establishment of view corridors.
- Make downtown Arctic a community and neighborhood destination through the establishment of day, evening and weekend activities.
- Connect Arctic to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Consideration of green energy initiatives including but not limited to consideration of integrating geothermal and/or solar energy projects into (re)development proposals.

The development program advocates capitalizing on the unique assets of Arctic Village, in particular its proximity to the Pawtuxet River and the West Warwick Greenway bicycle path along with the existence of several landmark and historic buildings and mills. The Redevelopment Agency contemplates a direct connection between Arctic Village and the Pawtuxet River utilizing the river and the bike path as amenities to any development in the Redevelopment District.

Both new development and adaptive reuse of historic and other landmark structures shall be considered as part of any redevelopment plan. The landmark buildings and the historic properties and mills could be repurposed as mixed use properties including residential apartments, artist's lofts and condominiums which are envisioned to supplement market demand for any new retail, office and service uses to be introduced into the area.

The following structures of importance should be retained and repurposed as part of any proposed redevelopment project(s):

- Arctic Mill 21-33 Factory Street
- Arctic Mill Store 12 Factory Street
- Centreville Mill 3 Bridal Avenue
- U.S. Post Office Building 1190 Main Street
- Centreville Savings Bank 1218 Main Street
- JJ Newberry Store 37 Washington Street

The West Warwick Town Hall and Municipal Complex, comprised of approximately three acres is located at the northern entrance of the Redevelopment District and may also be available for redevelopment. The Redevelopment Agency advocates that a chosen developer and/or development firm work with the Town to relocate the municipal complex and open this prime land for development, consider integrating the municipal complex into a mixed use development on the site and/or any combination thereof.

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## **BENEFITS OF THE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

- **Existence of the Redevelopment Agency:** The Agency possesses the power and authority to acquire property, exercise of eminent domain, to develop property, to layout streets and highways, public utilities, parks and recreational areas, off street parking, to prepare plans for redevelopment and perform any or all planning activities within the redevelopment district on behalf of the Planning Board.

- **Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy:** The basis for the creation of the Redevelopment Agency and District, the Redevelopment Strategy is the product of an extensive public planning process which included residents, business owners, local and state political leaders including Town Council Members, State Legislators and the Town Manager all whom have expressed their strong support for the redevelopment of Arctic Village.
- **Economic Development Tools:** These tools including consideration of tax treaties, the possibility of phased implementation of tax rates, reduced and/or phased assessments, the implementation of the Municipal Economic Development (MED) zone and the Town's designated State Enterprise Zone status.
- **Rhode Island Commerce Corporation Economic Development Programs:** West Warwick has been identified as a Hope Community which entitles the Town to priority status for consideration of the following development incentive programs.
  - **Rebuild RI Tax Credit:** This program provides capitol to qualified real estate projects that demonstrate a "financing gap;" incentives include:
    - Up to 30% on eligible project costs - \$15 million project cap.
    - Usable, tradable and redeemable at 90% of value.
    - Sales tax exemption on building materials may apply
    - Credits payable in 5 years following completion (certificate of occupancy)
  - **Qualified Jobs Incentive:** This program provides businesses with a base tax credit for creating a minimum number of new jobs in Rhode Island or growing an in-state workforce by a specific percentage.
    - Base tax credit: up to \$2,500/new full-time job; Bonus: up to \$7,500/job if certain criteria (targeted industry, hope community, etc.) are met
    - Must create a minimum 20 jobs or grow in-state workforce by 10%; lowered to 10 jobs if certain criteria are met
    - Benefit may not exceed 10 years in term or income tax withholdings generated by the jobs created; Applications must be received by 12/31/18
    - Usable, tradable and redeemable (90% to the state)
- **Potential Private Finance Opportunity:** Federal EB-5 Foreign Investor Program created by Congress to stimulate the U.S. economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors. A local group specializing in the EB-5 Foreign Investor Program has expressed an interest in potentially partnering in the redevelopment of Arctic Village.

- **Strong Local Support:** Arctic Village Association (Businesses Located in the Arctic Village), Local elected officials including the Town Council, State Representatives, the Town Manager, have pledged their support for the creation and the efforts of the Redevelopment Agency in revitalizing Arctic Village.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

The Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency is seeking experienced real estate developers/development firms who may be interested in partnering with the Redevelopment Agency to develop all or select portions of the Arctic Village Redevelopment District.

Responses to the RFP will be evaluated based on the information provided, which at a minimum shall include the following:

- Full name and address of the person, firm or corporation person duly authorized to submit the RFP.
- Designation of the development team working with the Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency including but not limited to principals in the firm, engineering and architectural staff, legal staff and other professional staff.
- Identification of the key firms participating in the project, their expertise, roles and responsibilities.
- Previous development experience of all participating entities, particularly in public/private partnerships and/or similar major mixed use developments.
- Previous developer and legal team experience in successfully undertaking/participating in condemnation proceedings.
- Names and location of at least three (3) or more relevant projects and associated references.
- Evidence of the financial capability to complete a project of this magnitude (will be kept confidential).
- Financial references for the developer/development team.
- Brief narrative description of the project understanding and general approach to the project.
- Preliminary development concepts in terms of type, tenant mix, market orientation and quality of proposed development.
- Preliminary information on approach to project financing including identification of potential development options, general uses of funds, past experience, and anticipated public and private sector roles and responsibilities.
- Presentation of current development relationships with specific tenants/tenant mixes.
- Any other pertinent information.

It should be noted that selected developers will likely be required to respond with additional information including, but not limited to the following:

- Feasibility study.
- Design Plans.
- Detailed proformas.
- Financial and cash flow analysis.

- Evidence of financing capability.
- Terms and conditions of proposed agreement.

## **PRE-SUBMISSION CONFERENCE**

The Redevelopment Agency will conduct a pre-submission conference on November 18, 2015 at 1 o'clock PM in the West Warwick Town Hall, Town Council Chambers, 1170 Main Street West Warwick, RI 02893. The pre-submission conference is intended to allow potential developers/development teams ask any questions of the Redevelopment Agency related to the RFP and to request clarification on any of the elements contained in these specifications.

The pre-submission conference is not mandatory but interested developers/development teams are urged to attend. Pre-registration is, however, mandatory and interested developers/development teams **MUST** pre-register one week in advance by contacting the Town Planner at [mcarruolo@westwarwickri.org](mailto:mcarruolo@westwarwickri.org)

## **PROCEDURE FOR CONSULTANT SELECTION:**

The Agency will review the RFP submissions using the criteria below. The Agency may develop a short list of respondents who may be asked to provide additional information and possibly invited before the Agency for a formal interview.

The selection(s) will be on the basis of the overall best response to the Redevelopment Agency including but not limited to, previous experience in successfully completing similar projects of similar scale and complexity, qualifications of the development team, knowledge of the project and process, overall understanding and approach to the project, financial capabilities, timing of the proposed development and the extent of private sector participation.

The evaluation criteria include but are not limited to the following:

- Related project experience.
- Past project performance.
- Strengths of developer organization.
- Project methodology.
- Financial capacity.
- Adherence to goals and objectives of this RFP and the Arctic Village Redevelopment Strategy.

***The Arctic Village Redevelopment Agency reserves the right to award the total proposal as submitted, to award or eliminate certain individual task(s)/item(s) in the proposal and/or reject any and all proposals.***



## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

Respondents are urged to be as creative as possible in preparing their proposals for initial review by the Agency. However, all proposals must clearly convey all of the required information in a clear and concise format. Proposals shall be bound and submitted on typewritten, one-sided, 8 ½" x 11" paper with a font size of no less than 12-point type. Proposals shall contain a Table of Contents that cross-references each requirement with specific page in the proposal.

In addition to the general specifications included with this Request for Proposals (RFP), all respondents shall submit (1) original and six (6) copies of their proposal AND one digital copy (preferably pdf) on a flash drive (preferred) or a cd.

The Agency will be accepting written proposals beginning on December 7, 2015. All proposals shall be submitted on or after the submission date and addressed to:

K. Joseph Shekarchi, Attorney at Law  
33 College Hill Road, suite 15-E  
Warwick, RI 02886

All questions regarding the technical aspects of the specifications should be addressed to Mr. Mark Carruolo, Town Planner (401) 827-9025, or email at: [mcarruolo@westwarwickri.org](mailto:mcarruolo@westwarwickri.org)